

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMNT STRATEGY
COMMITTEE
September 29, 2025
10:00 AM
SAP&DC
Altoona, PA**

MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome and introductions

The following members were present at the meeting:

- Larry Myers, Schneider Electric, Bedford County
- Diana McClure, Keller Engineers, Inc., Blair County
- Matt Price, Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau
- Paul Johnson, FIDA, Fulton County
- Kellie Goodman-Shaffer, Bedford County Chamber of Commerce
- Sabrina Lane, Penn Highlands Community College, Cambria County
- Karen Gnagey, Hon Investment Consulting, Meyersdale Borough, Somerset County
- Rick Truscello, Cambria County resident

Others in attendance included:

- Lee Slusser, SAP&DC
- Matthew Bauerlin, SAP&DC
- Janice Streightiff, SAP&DC
- Steven Howsare, SAP&DC
- Ed Locher, SAP&DC
- Ben Dworsky, SAP&DC

Each participant received a meeting packet that included:

- Copy of the Draft Goals and Objectives

II. Review of the CEDS Process

Lee thanked everyone for coming out for the meeting, and explained the purpose of the sign-in sheets. Everyone introduced themselves. Lee reviewed the purpose, functions, and importance of the CEDS, noting that it is required by the U.S. Economic Development

Administration, that it is used to demonstrate consistency with regional planning for various Federal and even state projects and grant applications, that it is the focus of the EO 12372 process, and that it is commonly used. He noted that it is the single biggest source of socioeconomic data on the Southern Alleghenies. He explained that we are about to establish a self-updating data dashboard website that will make much of this data more accessible and user friendly. EDA is funding this dashboard for each EDD in Pennsylvania. Lee showed the existing data dashboard for the North Central EDD in Ridgway, and explained how our new data dashboard will enable meaningful comparisons between counties, regions, and the Commonwealth as a whole.

III. Review of Advancing the Alleghenies, our existing 2025-2029 CEDS

Lee reviewed the existing CEDS, which had been adopted by the SAP&DC Board of Directors in December 2024. Lee reviewed the process that developed this CEDS, noted the issues it identified, and summarized the socioeconomic data.

IV. Review of Year One Accomplishments

Using as a guide the *CEDS Annual Performance Progress Report* that SAP&DC is required to file with the U.S. Economic Development Agency (last filed on June 30, 2025) as well as a PowerPoint presentation, Lee updated the CEDS Committee on which goals, objectives, and strategies from the 2025-2029 CEDS had been addressed since that CEDS was adopted in December 2024.

Lee talked a bit about the emergence of agriculture as a growing industry. Diana McClure and Matt Price asked what all was included as agriculture. Matt Price discussed the progress of the Regional Tourism Group and the re-emergence of *The Alleghenies* as a marketing brand. Lee highlighted accomplishments in outdoor recreation planning, the DCNR-funded mini-grant program, the greenways plan, SAP&DC's revolving loan programs, the workforce development board, ARC Local Access Road program construction, US 219, Alleghenies Broadband, housing, LTAP, GIS data, Breezewood redevelopment planning, the regional comprehensive plan, the regional greenways plan, and substance abuse treatment for the workforce.

Matt Price suggested reporting critical access airports in future reports to EDA as an accomplishment, given the growth of users at Altoona Blair County Airport. Diana McClure asked about 9/11 Trail funding in Garrett, given that the right-of-way to Berlin expired since CSX originally took the railroad by eminent domain. Lee stated that the ARC money will still be used.

V. Review of Initially Proposed Changes to the Existing 2025-2029 CEDS

Lee reviewed a series of changes to the existing 2025-2029 CEDS proposed by staff.

- The deletion of Goal 6 as suggested by Federal guidelines. Goal 6 addresses equity in the distribution of resources.
- The addition of Goal 3, Objective A, Strategy 6 to expand the region's electric vehicle charging network where demand exists, particularly away from already served locations.
- The addition of Goal 4, Objective B, Strategy 2 to support redevelopment planning efforts for areas that are underutilized or in danger of becoming so.
- The addition of Goal 5, Objective E to support environmental cleanup efforts where it will improve public health, community desirability, or economic development potential.

The CEDS committee discussed each one of these proposals and supported the involved changes. Diana McClure, Rick Truscello, and Matt Price asked about the implications of deleting Goal 6.

VI. Solicitation of Additional Proposed Changes

Lee solicited any additional changes to the existing CEDS proposed by the CEDS Committee, as opposed to staff. None were offered. Diana McClure suggested working with the PA Borough's Association as well as PSATS.

VII. Review of Next Steps

Lee reviewed the process of amending the CEDS and its public display on the website.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 AM, Eastern Daylight Savings Time, September 29, 2028.

<p><u>NOTE:</u> The next meeting of the CEDS Committee will be held at a date and time to be determined.</p>
